



T O M B

OF

W A S H I N G T O N.



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T O M B

OF

W A S H I N G T O N,

AT

M O U N T V E R N O N.

PHILADELPHIA:

C A R E Y A N D H A R T.

1840.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1840, by CAREY
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C. SHERMAN & CO. PRINTERS,
19 ST. JAMES STREET.

TO THE

HON. HENRY CLAY.

DEAR SIR,

It is with great pleasure that I dedicate to you a detailed account of the removal of the remains of Washington, from their original frail tenement at Mount Vernon, to an imperishable sarcophagus, composed of a solid block of Pennsylvania marble.

I am very happy in making you the depositary of this event, which, even in the course of a few years, I should have remembered but indistinctly, and which, I trust, will be interesting to you, and to all who venerate the character of this truly great man.

In making the communication public, I have thought proper to prepare the following pages in the form of a souvenir; which embraces, with other subjects, copies

of the correspondence between the late Major Lawrence Lewis and Mr. John Struthers the sculptor and donor, and what will perhaps be as acceptable as any of the documents, an accurate view of the sarcophagus and of the family vault at Mount Vernon.

With great esteem and regard,

Yours sincerely and truly,

WILLIAM STRICKLAND.

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CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

A MARBLE SARCOPHAGUS,

IN WHICH TO DEPOSIT

THE REMAINS OF WASHINGTON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ. TO JOHN STRUTHERS.

Audley, February 22d, 1837.

DEAR SIR.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 7th inst. In reply to it, I can say, being the only surviving executor of General Washington, I have only my own feelings to consult upon a refusal or acceptance of your very liberal and polite offer of a stone coffin as a depository for the remains of him "who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

The manner of making your offer, the delicacy with which it is proffered, forbids a refusal to accept it,

and I tender you, in behalf of every relative of this distinguished man, the most cordial and sincere thanks for the kind feeling which has actuated you upon this occasion. I leave it to your experience to make it in form and manner as you may think best.

I am, dear sir,

Very respectfully yours,

LAWRENCE LEWIS.

It is suggested the following, or something similar, should be put upon the marble coffin:

THIS SARCOPHAGUS,

CONTAINING THE REMAINS OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

WAS MADE AND PRESENTED FOR THE PURPOSE,

BY

JOHN STRUTHERS,

OF PHILADELPHIA,

THIS — DAY OF — A. D. 1837.

JOHN STRUTHERS TO LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ.

Philadelphia, March 4th, 1837.

DEAR SIR,

It is with sincere pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of your favour, granting me permission to execute the Sarcophagus. I have only to request that you will send me, as soon as convenient, the dimensions of the coffin which it is to contain.

With sentiments of esteem,

I remain, your most obedient,

JOHN STRUTHERS.

JOHN STRUTHERS TO LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ.

Philadelphia, August 15th, 1837.

DEAR SIR,

In the course of the ensuing week I shall have the Sarcophagus for your deceased relative finished, and ready for shipment. Will you oblige me by your

opinion as to the safest mode of forwarding it, and to whom you wish it consigned. I am entirely ignorant of the different routes, and being anxious that as little transhipment may be made as possible, I trouble you for this information. I will also suggest the propriety of having a foundation built upon which to place the Sarcophagus, as the marble work is very heavy. The most convenient, and I believe the best plan would be, to sink four walls deep enough to prevent the action of the frost, and the possibility of their sinking any deeper after they are built; if they are made of bricks, nine inches will be wide enough for them, and as the base is seven feet, ten inches long, by three feet, one inch, in width, it will be necessary to have the walls near that size; this is, however, left entirely to yourself. On the receipt of your answer, I will take immediate measures to forward the work.

Most respectfully yours,

JOHN STRUTHERS.

LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ. TO JOHN STRUTHERS.

Audley, August 20th, 1837.

DEAR SIR,

Your esteemed favour of the 15th inst. only reached me last evening, owing to my visiting this upper country for air and exercise.

I think it best for the *Sarcophagus* to be shipped from Philadelphia direct to Alexandria, District of Columbia, to the care of Mr. Edward Daingerfield, merchant of that place; to him I have written requesting his particular attention to it, and the landing of it, which I feel confident he will do. I will thank you to give me the height of it, as I have now some doubts whether the door of the vault is sufficiently large to admit it; in this event, I shall have to enlarge it, and so soon as all is ready I will give you notice, and shall then be truly gratified by your presence when the remains of my illustrious relative and friend are placed in your liberal present. A

foundation shall be laid such as you recommend, and that without delay.

I am truly and respectfully yours,

LAWRENCE LEWIS.

Please direct to me, Berryville, Clark County. When you inform me of the height of the Sarcophagus, be pleased to give me some description of the ornamental part of it; Doctor Coxe, in his letter to his daughter, says it is very handsome. This request is made to enable me to give some account of it to the many inquiries made of me respecting it.

JOHN STRUTHERS TO LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ.

Philadelphia, September 18th, 1837.

DEAR SIR,

On Saturday last, the Sarcophagus was finished, and I took the liberty of inviting a few of my friends to see the carving, and they having mentioned it to others, I found that thousands flocked to see it. It

has also been noticed in the newspapers, which I exceedingly regret, but of course could not prevent. There will be no opportunity of forwarding it before Saturday next, as the packets sail but once a week. I will send it on that day. My friend, William Strickland, who gave the design, will accompany me, and we will endeavour to be at Alexandria when the vessel arrives.

Most respectfully yours,

JOHN STRUTHERS.

JOHN STRUTHERS TO LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ.

Philadelphia, September —th, 1837.

RESPECTED SIR,

I have this day shipped the boxes containing the Sarcophagus to Alexandria, care of Mr. E. Daingerfield, according to your directions, and have forwarded to him a bill of lading. It is shipped on board the sloop Johnston, Captain C. F. Norton, owned by Captain Joseph Hand, of this city, who, when he under-

stood for whom the *Sarcophagus* was intended, promptly declined any remuneration for its transportation, and, with Captain Norton, he has made such arrangements as will effectually prevent its taking any injury on board of the vessel.

The sloop will probably arrive on Saturday or Sunday next, and my friend and myself will leave here on Friday or Saturday, and hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on the Monday following.

I will remain in Alexandria until the boxes are unloaded from the vessel, and on their way to Mount Vernon. Believe me, as ever,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN STRUTHERS.

LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ. TO JOHN STRUTHERS.

Audley, September 26th, 1837.

DEAR SIR.

Your favour of the 18th inst. only reached me this moment. I hasten to acknowledge it. The delay

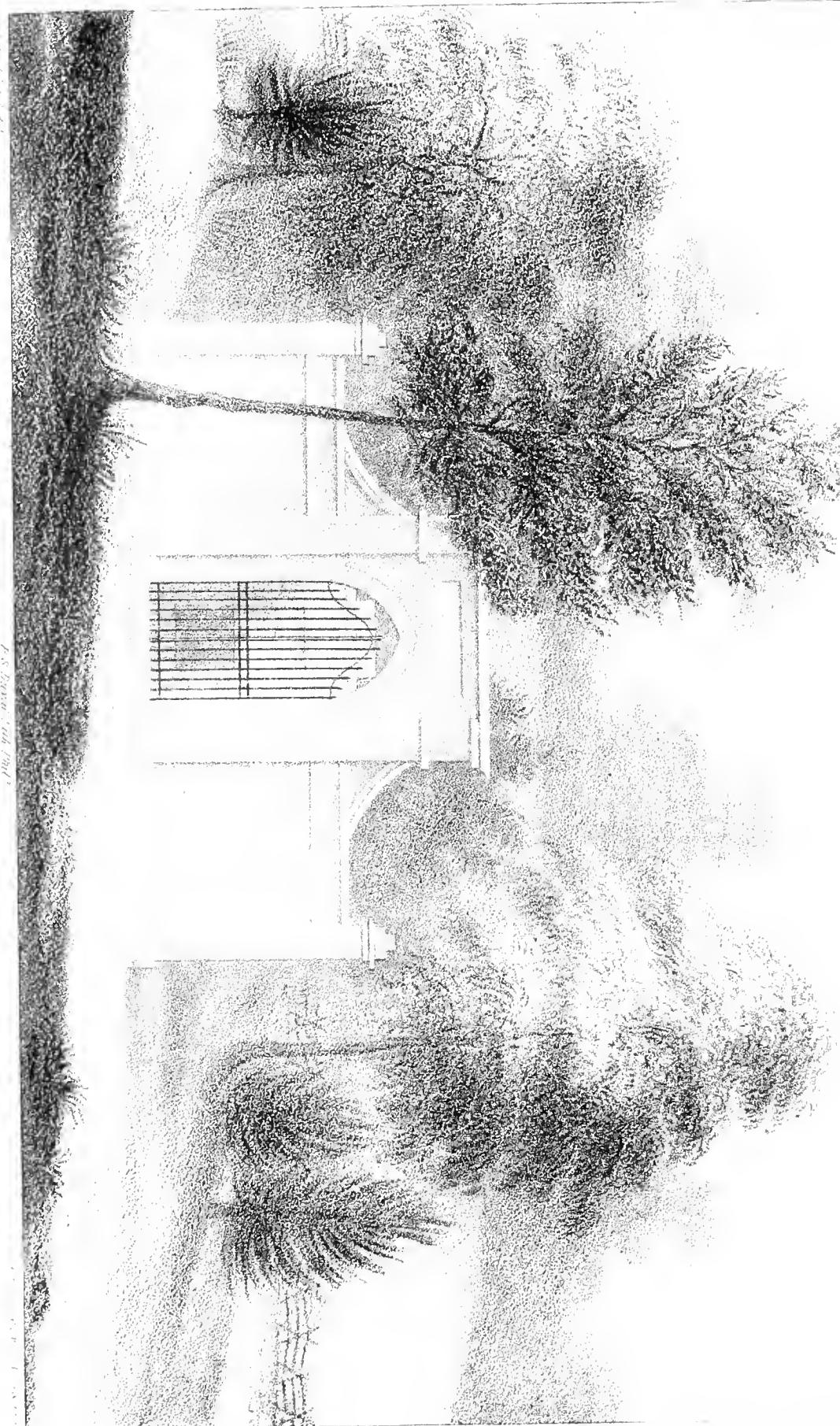
arises from my being still at this place, detained by unavoidable circumstances, but hope to reach Alexandria in time to receive the *Sarcophagus*, and have it conveyed to Mount Vernon. So soon as all is ready I will give you information of it, and I can truly say it will afford me much pleasure to see Mr. Strickland with you. I have seen the account given of the *Sarcophagus* in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: it would appear from it that the Executive of the United States made the first application to you for the cost of the work. This, I presume, must be a mistake of the printer. Will it not be well to set him right in this matter? he could have had no knowledge of the transaction until its appearance in the *Inquirer*. Your favour, enclosing me a sketch of the *Sarcophagus*, came safely to hand, for which accept my thanks.

Most respectfully yours,

LAWRENCE LEWIS.

TOMB OF WASHINGTON.





TOMB OF WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON is situated on the west bank of the Potomac, about sixteen miles below the city of Washington, and commands from its elevated position a very extensive and picturesque view of the various windings of this beautiful river, both above and below the point upon which we now see the unostentatious but dilapidated mansion of Washington.

The whole estate originally consisted of ten thousand acres, a small portion of which was cultivated in the lifetime of this great man; and about three thousand acres of this tract were granted to his nephew and friend, Major Lewis, the last of Washington's executors.

It was called Mount Vernon after Admiral Vernon, then high admiral in the British navy. Washington

had a brother in this navy, and made application through him to the admiral for a commission, which was granted, but owing to the anxious solicitations of his mother, he declined the appointment, and was content to push his fortunes in the field at home.

The mansion is constructed of frame-work, two stories in height, presenting a piazza or portico of square panelled pilasters or piers, extending across the whole eastern or river front. It has an observatory and cupola in the centre of the roof, and exhibits, in any position in which it may be viewed, the outlines and semblance of the residence of a gentleman.

The lawn in the rear or western front is flanked on the north and south by kitchen gardens and conservatories, containing to this day many rare and valuable exotics, presented to Washington during his lifetime. The distribution of the rooms of the mansion on the ground floor is very simple and convenient.

A spacious hall is formed in the centre of the building upon the same level with the pavement of the portico, which is of wide dimensions, laid with tes-

selected Italian marble, and communicates with three parlours, with the main stairway leading to the chambers of the second story, and with the observatory.

The wing to the south of the main building contains the library and breakfast-room, with a narrow staircase leading to Washington's private study on the second floor. Among the many curiosities and relics contained within the walls of Mount Vernon, we were shown an ancient map of Virginia, representing in etched outlines all the territory between the Atlantic Ocean and the waters of the Ohio, upon which are to be seen many pencilled traces and marks from Washington's own hand, of the route which he traversed during Braddock's disastrous and fatal campaign against the Indians. His spyglass, sword, and other weapons of a military kind, are objects of great curiosity; likewise the key of the Bastile, which is enclosed in a glass case and suspended on the wall in the hall of entrance.

His bust, an original by Houdon, stands upon a bracket, over the door of entrance into the library.

This work of art possesses much interest, from the circumstance of its having been executed from the life, by a mask in plaster. It conveys a truly characteristic and strongly-marked expression, and is, without doubt, the best likeness extant.

The fireplace of the drawing-room is decorated with a rich Italian mantel, presented, in the year 1785, to General Washington, by Samuel Vaughan, Esq. of London, the father of the venerable and highly respected John Vaughan of Philadelphia. It is composed of variegated Sienna marble, sculptured with a bold chisel, and represents on the tablets of the frieze the most prominent objects of agriculture and husbandry, in chaste and beautiful bas-relief.

The remains of the old family vault are about three hundred yards to the south of the mansion, situated on the declivity of a deep dell, and surrounded by trees of large growth, and consist simply of a narrow excavation in the bank of earth, arched over with brick, and covered with a deep sod.

Although the removal of the vault was contemplated by Washington himself, some time previous

to his death, it was not finally determined on until an attempt was made, many years ago, to desecrate the remains of the illustrious deceased. The vault was entered, and a scull and some bones were carried off; but the robber was discovered, and the booty surrendered; they formed no part of the remains of Washington.

It is not generally known that about nine years ago a new tomb was constructed at Mount Vernon upon the site pointed out and especially selected by General Washington. The will of this great man, with reference to the removal of the old family vault, has been most scrupulously complied with, through the agency of his then ~~only~~ surviving executor, Major Lawrence Lewis, the nephew and friend of the illustrious deceased.

This structure consists simply of an excavation made partly in the side of a steep, sloping hill, which has a southern exposure upon a thickly-wooded dell. The walls are built of brick, and arched over at the height of eight feet above the level of the ground. The front of the tomb-house is roughcast, and has a plain iron

door, inserted in a strong freestone casement: over the door is placed a sculptured stone panel, upon which are inscribed these impressive words:

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE.”

At a small distance from the walls of the tomb, on all sides, there is a surrounding enclosure of brick-work, elevated to a height of twelve feet, and guarded in front with an iron gateway, opening several feet in advance of the vault door. This gateway is flanked with pilasters, surmounted by a stone cornice and coping, covering a pointed gothic arch, over which is sculptured, upon a plain slab, inserted in the brick-work :

“WITHIN THIS ENCLOSURE REST THE REMAINS OF GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

It was with no ordinary feeling of solemn gratification that we approached this hallowed spot, nor were our minds less impressed with veneration and reverence in beholding the rude and perishable fabric which contained the ashes of him that was “first in war,

first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

The keys of the vault were in the possession of a middle-aged mulatto, the steward of Mount Vernon, to whom we were introduced by a letter given us by Mr. John Augustin Washington, whom we accidentally met at Alexandria, while on our way from Washington City to the family seat, for the purpose of making arrangements for the deposit of the marble Sarcophagus within the vault. We were accompanied to the spot by the steward, and the grated doors were opened for the first time in the lapse of seven years.

The first object which struck our view upon the threshold of the vault was the scull of a young man, encrusted over with a green mould, and surrounded on all sides with the decayed fragments of coffins, which appeared as though they had been thrown together promiscuously, or had fallen in, exposing in many places the bones of various parts of the human body. The air of the vault was foul. The decayed wood was dripping with moisture, which had found its way through the grass covering that overlaid the

brick arch above. The slimy snail glistened in the light of the door opening. The brown centipede was disturbed by the admission of the fresh air, and the mouldy cases of the dead gave out a pungent and unwholesome odour. We clambered over these obstacles into the deep recess, and found the coffin of Washington in the rear of the vault, with those of Mrs. Washington and Judge Washington to the right and left of it, with several others of the deceased members of the family, piled away in great disorder and confusion.

From an inspection of this unpleasant scene, we ascertained two important circumstances. The one, that the exterior iron doorway was too small to admit the entrance of the marble Sarcophagus; the other, that if the door had been sufficiently wide, the dampness of the vault itself would have destroyed, in the course of time, the texture of the marble, and defaced the richness and beauty of the exterior sculpture. We, therefore, retraced our steps, and left the vault with no ordinary feelings of disappointment and mortification that such should have been the result of our visit.

We returned to the mansion, and reflected upon the best plan for carrying into execution the safe enshrinement of the body in some other place than the interior of the vault. In the mean time, Mr. Augustin Washington had arrived at Mount Vernon, and the facts were detailed to him. This young gentleman was found to be very amiable and intelligent. He informed us that Major Lewis was at his upper farm in Virginia, and would be at Mount Vernon in a day or two. After spending the night at Mount Vernon, we repaired to Washington City to await the arrival of the Sarcophagus, which had been shipped at Philadelphia on the preceding week.

Upon the 5th of October the Sarcophagus arrived, and was landed at Alexandria, whither we repaired, and made arrangements for its transportation to Mount Vernon the next day.

Major Lewis had also arrived at Alexandria, and we were introduced to him and his son Lorenzo. Imagine a figure stately and erect, upwards of six feet in height, with a keen, penetrating eye, a high forehead partially covered with the silvery locks of

seventy winters, intelligent and bland in expression, in movement graceful and dignified, and you will have the portraiture of the early companion and friend of the immortal Washington.

Upon a consultation with this gentleman, after stating to him the difficulties which would attend the placing of the Sarcophagus in the damp vault, and the inappropriateness of the situation for such a work of art, and upon suggesting to him a plan for constructing a suitable foundation on the right of the entrance gate, on the outside of the vault, between it and the surrounding walls; and the practicability of extending the side walls of the vault to the surrounding enclosure, and arching it over beyond any contact with the soil of the sloping hill, taking care to guard the vaulted chamber with a metallic roof, with an additional grille of iron bars in front, and other fastenings and securities, as guards against idle curiosity and the chances of attempt at desecration, he consented to the plan, and we set out from Alexandria with the sculptor and the workmen who had been engaged in the execution and conveyance of the Sarcophagus.

A large wagon and two drays were found necessary to convey these marbles from Alexandria to Mount Vernon. During the time occupied in this business we were invited to visit Wood Lawn, the seat of Major Lewis, a beautiful spot, but three miles from Mount Vernon, upon which is situated a good substantial mansion, sequestered in the midst of a dark wood, with an occasional opening cut in the forests, through which a view of the water of the Potomac, and of the cupola of Mount Vernon, refreshed the sight, and gave to our minds a strong impression of the skill and rural taste of Washington, the master spirit, under whose auspices Freedom and the fields were made to bloom.

On the morning of the 7th we repaired to Mount Vernon, and found the Sarcophagus had arrived, and was deposited in front of the enclosure; and the workmen, assisted by a few of the domestics belonging to the household, were directed to dig out a suitable foundation upon which to wall up and place it, on the *right* of the entrance gate. During the operation the steward was directed to procure lights

for the purpose of entering the vault, and preparing the way for the removal of the body to the outside of the vault. The gate of the enclosure was temporarily closed, and upon the opening of the vault door we entered, accompanied by Major Lewis and his son. The coffin containing the remains of Washington was in the extreme back part of the vault; and to remove the case containing the leaden receptacle, it was found necessary to put aside the coffins that were piled up between it and the doorway. After clearing a passageway, the case, which was much decayed, was stripped off, and the lead of the lid was discovered to have sunk very considerably from head to foot; so much so, as to form a curved line of four to five inches in its whole length. This settlement of the metal had perhaps caused the soldering of the joints to give way about the upper or widest part of the coffin. At the request of Major Lewis this fractured part was turned over on the lower part of the lid, exposing to view a head and breast of large dimensions, which appeared, by the dim light of the candles, to have suffered but little from the effects of time. The

eye-sockets were large and deep, and the breadth across the temples, together with the forehead, appeared of unusual size. There was no appearance of grave-clothes; the chest was broad; the colour was dark, and had the appearance of dried flesh and skin adhering closely to the bones. We saw no hair, nor was there any offensive odour from the body, but we observed, when the coffin had been removed to the outside of the vault, the dripping down of a yellow liquid, which stained the marble of the Sarcophagus. A hand was laid upon the head and instantly removed; the lead of the lid was restored to its place; the body, raised by six men, was carried and laid in the marble coffin, and the ponderous cover being put on and set in cement, it was sealed from our sight on Saturday, the 7th day of October, 1837.

Immediately after the performance of this melancholy ceremony, the Sarcophagus was cased up with plank to prevent any injury being done to the carving during the operation of enlarging the vault.

The relatives, consisting of Major Lewis, Lorenzo Lewis, John Augustin Washington, George Washing-

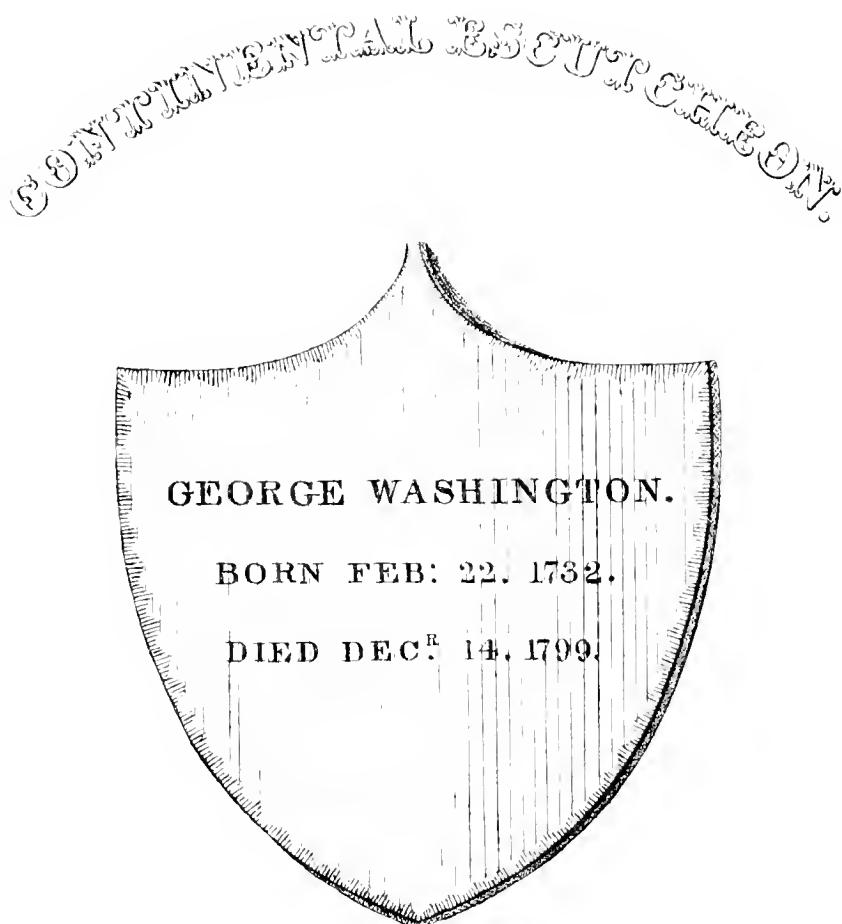
ton, the Reverend Mr. Johnson and lady, and Miss Jane Washington, then retired to the mansion.

The deepest feelings of reverence pervaded this assembly. The descendants of this illustrious man had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing his ashes imperishably seured from the slow but sure attack of time.

It is here proper to remark, that when the wooden case was removed from the leaden coffin, a silver breast-plate, in the shape of the old continental shield or escutcheon* was found, upon which was engraved in Roman characters, the date of the birth and death of Washington. This escutcheon was about the size of the palm of a hand, with an ornamental chased border or margin. It had evidently been attached to the leaden lid, but, from some cause or other, it had given way, and was found between the fragments of the exterior wooden case or covering.

During a period of thirty-eight years the wooden coffin had been thrice renewed, and the relatives of

* The common impression of a heart.



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

BORN FEB: 22. 1732.

DIED DEC^R. 14. 1799.

An exact representation of the Silver Shield, or escutcheon which was attached to the leaden coffin and which is now deposited in the Marble Sarcophagus.

this great man have, with a becoming and laudable desire, sought for a more permanent and imperishable receptacle in which to enshrine the ashes of the great benefactor of his country.

The construction of the Sarcophagus is of the modern form, and consists of an excavation from a solid block of marble, eight feet in length, three feet in width, and two feet in height, resting on a plinth, which projects four inches round the base of the coffin. The lid or covering stone is a ponderous block of Italian marble, emblazoned with the arms and insignia of the United States, beautifully sculptured in the boldest relief. The design occupies a large portion of the central part of the top surface, or lid, and represents a shield, divided into thirteen perpendicular stripes, which rests on the flag of our country, and is attached by cords to a spear, embellished with tassels, forming a background to the shield, by which it is supported. The crest is an eagle with open wings perching upon the superior bar of the shield, and is in the act of clutching the arrows and olive branch. Between these armorial bearings and the foot of the

coffin, upon the plain field of the lid, is the bold and deeply sculptured name of

WASHINGTON.

The foot of the coffin is inscribed as follows :

BY THE PERMISSION OF LAWRENCE LEWIS, ESQ., THIS SAR-
COPHAGUS OF WASHINGTON WAS PRESENTED BY
JOHN STRUTHERS, OF PHILADELPHIA,
MARBLE MASON.

Mr. Struthers, a citizen of Philadelphia, was applied to for the construction of a marble Sarcophagus. This gentleman, with a spirit of liberality, prompted by a deep feeling of regard and reverence for the character of Washington, solicited of Mr. Lewis the privilege to construct and present to the relatives of Washington a coffin composed of Pennsylvania marble, which has been executed with surpassing boldness and beauty of sculpture, for which he deserves the thanks of the community at large.

All the facts of the life and history of Washington are now, or ought to be, known to all the human

family, and it is not the intention of the author of these reminiscences to claim attention from the public, in any attempt to eulogize his character, who was

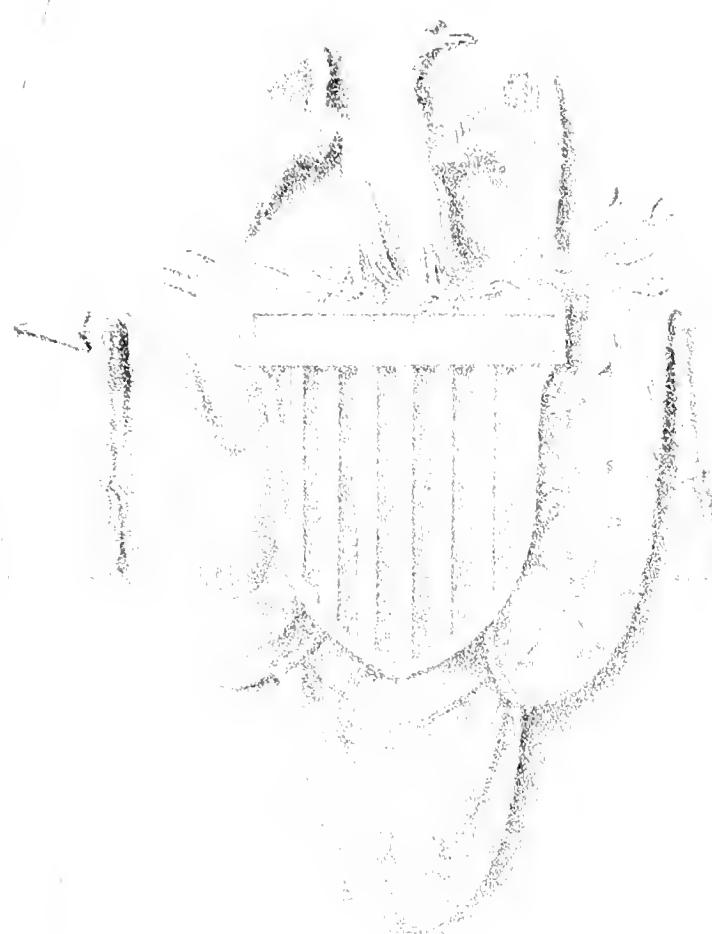
“Great, without pomp, without ambition, brave,
Proud, not to conquer fellow-men, but save.”

The proud fleet of the British, when ascending the Potomac during the last war, in passing with hostile front and bearing the hallowed spot of Mount Vernon, paused in their course; their officers and men were uncovered, amid the smoke of the minute gun, as a respectful token of their veneration for the memory of

WASHINGTON.

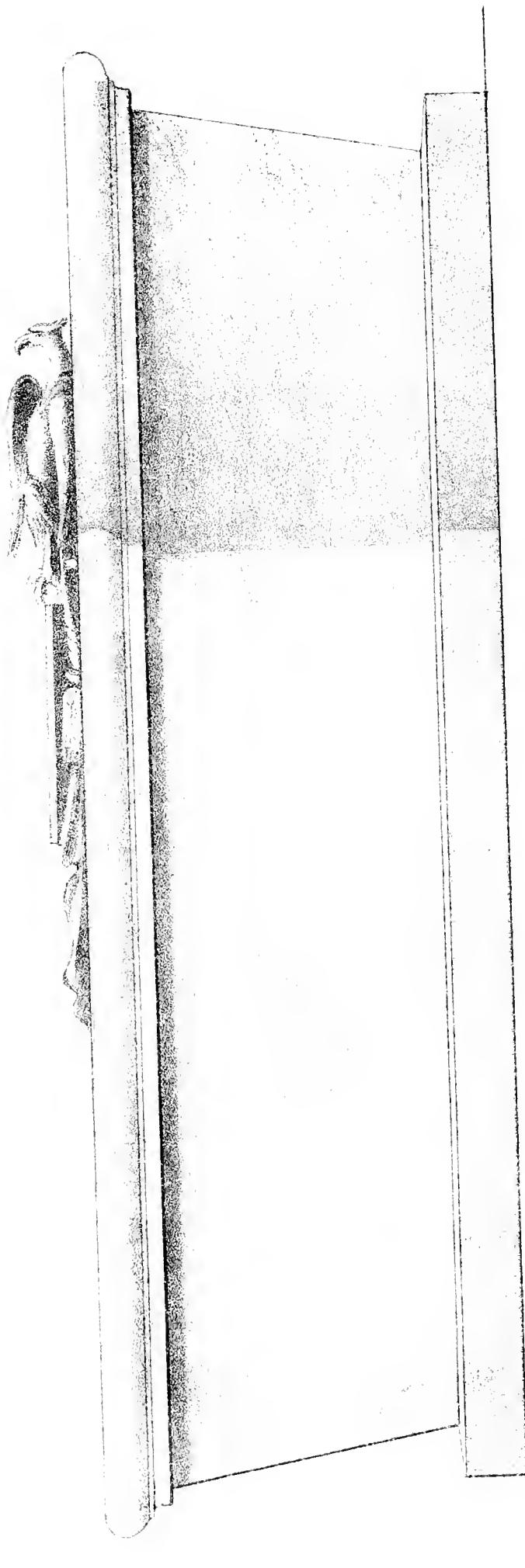
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The remains of Mrs. Washington are now deposited in a marble coffin, sculptured in a plain manner by the same chisel, and occupies the space on the *left* of the gateway, or entrance to the tomb.



WASSENGTON

TOP VIEW.



SIDE VIEW.

**WASHINGTON'S
FAREWELL ADDRESS.**

FAREWELL ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

The period of a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining

to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been an uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped, that it would be much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary; I have the con-

solation to believe, that while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country, for the many honours it has conferred on me; still more for the steady confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential

prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to the grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these states, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation, and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here perhaps I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with myself, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplations, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are the result

of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motives to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety, of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your

political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of *American*, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must also exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation de-

rived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have, in a common cause, fought and triumphed together: the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds, in the productions of the latter, great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise, and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow, and its commerce expanded. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its par-

ticular navigation invigorated; and while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of the maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water, will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort; and what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the *secure* enjoyment of indispensable *outlets* for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one *nation*. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connexion with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an

immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighbouring countries not tied together by the same government; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty; in this sense it is that your Union ought to be considered as the main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language

to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. 'Tis well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will, also, be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who, in any quarter, may endeavour to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *geographical* discriminations, “*Northern* and *Southern, Atlantic* and *Western*;” whence designing men may endeavour to excite a belief, that there is a real

difference in local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings which spring from these misrepresentations ; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head : they have seen in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them, of the policy in the general government and in the Atlantic states unfriendly to their interests in regard to the *Mississippi* ; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties—that with Great Britain, and that with Spain—which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely,

for the preservation of these advantages, on the *Union* by which they were procured! Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren, and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts, can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances, in all times, have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of government, better calculated than your former for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing, within itself, a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your

support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true *Liberty*. The basis of our political system, is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitution of government; but the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberations and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive to the fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and according to the alternate triumphs of different

parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government: destroying afterwards the very engines which lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be, to effect in the forms of the constitution alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you

may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments, as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interest, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty, itself, will find in such a government, with power properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is indeed little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with a particular reference to the founding

of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists, under different shapes, in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed: but in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate dominion of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which generally result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual: and, sooner or later, the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposi-

tion to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight,) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riots and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself, through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties, in free countries, are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true; and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism

may look with indulgence, if not with favour, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And, there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country, should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding, in the exercise of their powers of one department, to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy

us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern: some of them in our own country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in a way which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labour to subvert

these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

'Tis substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance,

institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it, is to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace; but remembering also, that timely disbursements to prepare for danger, frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions, in time of peace, to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives; but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate.

To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue, there must be taxes; that

no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the selection of the proper objects, (which is always a choice of difficulties,) ought to be a decisive motive for candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for the spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue, which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations: cultivate peace and harmony with all: religion and morality enjoin this conduct: and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt, that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it?—Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at

least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that in the place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interests. Antipathy in one nation against another, disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and untractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national pro-

pensity, and adopts, through passion, what reason would reject; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility, instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty of nations, has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation to another, produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favourite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, who devote themselves to the favourite nation, facility to betray or

sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be

avoided, instead of a defence against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike for another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil, and even to second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favourite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connexion as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote, relation. Hence, she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her

polities, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?

Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humour, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alli-

ances, with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it: for let me not be understood as capable of patronising infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary, and would be unwise, to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, in a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony and a liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favours or preferences; consulting the natural course of things: diffusing and diversifying by gentle means, the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing, with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to defend the rights of our mer-

chants, and to enable the government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favours from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favours, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favours from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I

may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far, in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles that have been delineated, the public records, and other evidences of my conduct, must witness to you and the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me; uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the

best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and in interest, to take a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary, on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without any thing more, from the obligations which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct, will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavour to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress

without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency, which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man, who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations; I anticipate with pleasing expectation, that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without

alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government; the ever favourite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labours, and dangers.

G. WASHINGTON.

United States, Sept. 17th, 1796.









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